

REMARKS

Claims 1, 5-9, 12, 16, 18-20 and 22-24 are amended; claims 2-4, 15, and 17 are canceled; and, claims 28-30 are added. Thus, claims 1, 5-14, 16 and 18-30 are now pending.

Claims 4, 5, 17, 18, 19, 22, and 24 are objected to. However, claims 4 and 17 are canceled hereby. The informalities occurring to claims 5, 18, 19, 22, and 24, are corrected as suggested by the Office Action. Thus, it is requested the objection be withdrawn.

At paragraph 3 on page 2, the Office Action rejects claims 7, 15, and 24 under 35 U.S.C. § 112. However, claim 15 is canceled hereby. Claims 7 and 24 are amended as suggested. Therefore, it is respectfully requested that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112 be withdrawn.

As claim 7 is not rejected over prior-art references, claim 7 is rewritten into independent form by incorporating all the features of original claim 1. Claim 7 is amended to overcome the 35 U.S.C. 112 rejection, as indicated above. Thus, claim 7 is placed in condition for allowance.

In paragraph 5 on page 3, claims 1, 2 and 9-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Te Velde (U.S. Patent No. 3,874,758). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

As the allowability of claim 4, which depends from claim 3, is indicated at paragraph 10 on page 6 of the Office Action, claim 1 is amended to incorporate all the features of claims 3 and 4. Claims 3 and 4 are canceled. Claims 5 and 8 are amended to depend from amended claim 1. Thus, claims 1, 5, and 8 are placed in condition for allowance.

Claim 2 is canceled without disclaimer of, or prejudice to, the subject matter therein.

Independent claim 9, directed to a photovoltaic panel, is amended to correspond to amended independent claim 7, directed to a photovoltaic panel producing method. As this rejection was not applied to claim 7, and because claim 7 is allowable as discussed above, it

is submitted that claim 9 is allowable. Claims 10 and 11 are allowable based on at lease their dependence from claim 9. For at least the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claims 1, 2 and 9-11 based on Te Velde be withdrawn.

In paragraph 6, on page 3, the Office Action rejects claims 1-3, 6, 9-16, 25 and 26 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Matlow et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,040,416) (hereinafter "Matlow"). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 is allowable for the reasons stated above in connection with the rejection based on Te Velde. Claims 2, 3 and 15 are canceled without disclaimer of, or prejudice to, the subject matter therein.

Claim 6 is rewritten into independent form by incorporating all the features of original claim 1, and additionally reciting a step of preparing a container including a bottom portion and a frame portion projecting from an outer periphery of the bottom portion. This amendment is supported by the embodiment shown in Fig. 35 and its relevant description at paragraphs [0139], [0142], [0150], and [0151] of the specification. New claim 28, dependent from claim 6, is supported at paragraphs [0029], [0030], and [0151] of the specification.

Matlow discloses a method of making a large area solar cell panel including a transparent acrylic plastic sheet 42; a transparent liquid plastic layer 43 that is calendered onto the plastic sheet 42; and solar cells 18 that are partially embedded in the plastic layer 43, which is then hardened (col. 1, lines 68-72).

Regarding the subject matter of claim 6 of the Applicant's case, however, Matlow does not teach or suggest preparing a container including a bottom portion and a frame portion projecting from an outer periphery of the bottom portion, or supplying a light-transmitting material to the container and thereby forming a light-transmitting layer. More specifically described, the transparent sheet 42 taught by Matlow cannot function as the

container recited in claim 6, because the sheet 42 does not have a frame portion projecting from a bottom portion.

Regarding the subject matter of claim 9, Matlow does not teach or suggest providing a plurality of transparent spherical members which are arranged, according to a rule, along a reference plane, and which cooperate with each other to hold a plurality of photovoltaic members such that the photovoltaic members are positioned on the spherical members. Matlow teaches that the solar cells 18 are embedded in the plastic layer 43. However, Matlow fails to teach or suggest providing transparent spherical members as recited in claim 9.

Claims 10 and 11 are allowable at least based on their dependence from claim 9.

Because the allowability of claim 17 is indicated at paragraph 10, on page 6, of the Office Action, claim 12 is amended to incorporate all the features of claim 17. Claim 17 is accordingly canceled. Claims 18, 19, 20, 22, 23 and 24 are amended to depend from amended claim 12. Thus, claims 12-14 and 18-27 are placed in condition for allowance.

Claim 16 is rewritten into independent form by incorporating all the features of original claim 12, and additionally limiting the three options to the one feature that the step of curing comprises exposing the light-transmitting layer to light.

Regarding the subject matter of claim 16, Matlow does not teach or suggest hardening the plastic layer 43 in a particular manner in which the plastic layer 43 is exposed to light. Matlow teaches hardening the plastic layer 43 after the solar cells 18 are embedded in the layer 43. However, Matlow does not teach or suggest hardening the plastic layer 43 by exposing the same 43 to light, in contrast to claim 16.

For at least the above-indicated reasons, Applicants respectfully assert that claims 6, 9-14, 16, 25 and 26 are not anticipated by Matlow. Thus, it is requested that the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) based on Matlow be withdrawn.

In paragraph 8 on page 4, the Office Action rejects claims 12-16, 25 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Paradise (U.S. Patent No. 2,904,613), in view of Ralph (U.S. Patent No. 3,025,335). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 12-14, 25 and 27 are allowable for the reasons stated above in connection with the rejection based on Matlow. Claim 15 is canceled, without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter therein.

Regarding claim 16, Paradise discloses a method of making a large area solar energy converter including a binder 12 of polyethylene. Paradise teaches hardening the binder 12, at col. 2, line 70 through col. 3, line 5 and col. 3, lines 32-38. However, Paradise does not teach or suggest hardening the binder 12 by exposing the binder 12 to light, in contrast to claim 16.

Ralph teaches a method of making a flexible solar energy converter panel including a flexible and transparent plastic layer 13 made of polyethylene, at column 1, lines 65-71. Ralph teaches that plastic layer 13 is placed upon the hot converters and the heat causes the converters to be imbedded into layer 13, which softens and assumes the bumpy shape of the converters, and that when layer 13 cools, it adheres to the converters (col. 2, lines 8-12). However, like Paradise, Ralph does not teach or suggest hardening the layer 13 by exposing the same 13 to light, in contrast to Applicants' claim 16.

For at least the above-explained reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the combination as recited in claim 16 is neither taught nor suggested, and thus not rendered obvious, by Paradise even in view of Ralph. Accordingly, it is respectfully requested that the rejection to claims 12-14, 16, 25 and 27 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Paradise in view of Ralph be withdrawn.

Further, a similar analysis would show that the applied references neither disclose, teach nor suggest the combinations as recited in new claims 28-30.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 5-14, 16 and 18-30 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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